

MACOMB ACADEMY

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*Dr. Anne-Marie Sladewski
Executive Director*

April 10, 2020

Dear Macomb Academy students, guardians, families and caregivers,

As I write this letter, the sun is shining outside and the temperatures are warming, which are sure signs that spring is getting ready to greet us in full bloom. In my humble opinion, it is just what we need and can use as we continue to live our lives with the new routines and structures we have established. It has been wonderful to hear from many of you who are sharing ways you are staying connected, active, motivated, optimistic, safe and healthy. All of the important things to keep in mind as we enjoy each day.

On behalf of the entire Macomb Academy community, I want to express our sincere and profound appreciation to you for your partnership, cooperation, patience, flexibility, and enthusiasm as we continue to address and keep you informed of the emerging issues related to COVID-19. It is for certain, beyond any doubt, while you are serving in the capacity as an integral extension of the teaching and learning experiences that occur at Macomb Academy, we could not be more grateful for you. While we are together in the building on a daily basis, like any relationship, it is easy to take for granted the depth and breadth of what happens and why it happens. During this time of “Macomb Academy from a distance”, what is clear is none of it happened by accident. The relationships, commitment, and dedication have been purposeful acts of kindness, humanitarianism, and doing what’s right for each other. Our entire Macomb Academy community is fertilized by the support and care of one another. I truly believe that is what is sustaining us while we shift our focus from Macomb Academy as the building that sits on Garfield Road to the Macomb Academy that resides in each and every one of us, keeping Macomb Academy vibrant and strong from a distance.

It has been one month since the first announcement from the governor regarding school closure. In many ways, it has taken everyone some time to adjust to the news, which is natural. There were questions. There were worries. There were fears. There were doubts. There were wonderings. As with most things, time is a healer. Time has provided us the opportunity and the use our ability to establish new routines and structures, filter news and information, comfort, support and reassure each other, and acclimate to adhering to the guidance of “stay home; stay safe”. We have a better perspective about what that means for us personally, professionally, and school related. That was no small undertaking and required time. Now, we have greater insight and an awareness about what it looks like for Macomb Academy, and how the year will continue away from the building on Garfield Road. Although different, it will continue.

In my last letter I wrote about the recent Executive Order 2020-35, extending school closures throughout Michigan for the remainder of the school year. I believe the decision was not made lightly, and in the 17

page document, Governor Whitmer provides explicit information and mandatory expectations that, although schools remain closed, learning continues, as it should be. Our goal since school first closed has been, and will continue to have students connected to us, connected to learning, and connected to one another. In the Executive Order, schools have been charged with developing and implementing a Continuity of Learning Plan (CLP) to ensure teaching and learning continues, to the best extent possible for all students, for the remainder of the school year.

The CLP for Macomb Academy will be developed with three goals in mind:

1. *Ongoing and Meaningful Instruction*: allowing students to continue learning at home with meaningful instruction and feedback from staff through the format that works best for them,
2. *Social Connection*: creating a sense of continuity and helping students maintain connections with Macomb Academy during the extended school closure, all while helping students to manage any possible worries or fears, and
3. *Equitable Educational Supports*: providing appropriate resources and personalized supports so that all students can continue to progress in the skills and knowledge.

I will facilitate the development of the plan with staff, and it will be approved by The John Engler Center for Charter Schools at Central Michigan University (CMU), the Macomb Academy charter authorizer. Once authorized by CMU, the plan will be presented to the Macomb Academy Board for approval, and submitted to the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) for implementation. The mandated implementation date is no later than April 28, 2020. Once the plan has been approved, I will be sharing it with you. Continuing with the Macomb Academy curriculum through distance learning will enable this year to count as if we were together in the physical building. This is essential, with the important component of working in partnership to ensure the plan is implemented. It will take all of us to fulfill the requirements of the plan. Rest assured the staff and I are considering the varying needs of all the students to receive instruction from a distance. As we develop the plan, it will be done with the accessibility of all students in mind, and with the available support of families and caregivers to assist in the implementation of the Macomb Academy Curriculum. Please know we are working diligently to ensure our students receive educational continuity and support as we shift to learning from a distance through the CLP.

I want to express my continuous gratitude for your efforts and support of each other and our staff during our physical distance from one another. It is truly a team effort, and one that Macomb Academy does well without hesitation, invitation, or requirement. What a point of pride for us to share as a connected community. I hope you are able to find some relaxation, “offline” enjoyment, and time to engage in interests that were challenging to accomplish when our lives existed at a more hectic pace. Perhaps we will realize we can make adjustments to continue what we find pleasurable about now when we return to life as we once knew it. I do miss you all and wish you good health and well-being each and every day. Please stay in touch. I am here for you in whatever way you find engaging, comforting and supportive. I thoroughly enjoy the phone calls, notes and messages, and most of all, the sharing, laughter, and connectedness. It is what makes us Macomb Academy.

Warmly regards,

Anne-Marie Sladewski, Ed.D.